



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, October 1, 2012

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (12-4635)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chair Genevra Berger, Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner Steven M. Olivas Esq., Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused: Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Dr. La-Doris McClaney, Commissioner Daphne Ng, Commissioner Sandra Rudnick and Commissioner Dr. Harriette F. Williams

Call to Order. (12-4359)

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Introductions of October 1, 2012 Meeting attendees. (12-4343)

Self-introductions were made.

2. Approval of the October 1, 2012 Meeting Agenda. (12-4344)

This item was tabled and taken out of order to allow a quorum of the Commission to be established. A quorum was established at 10:20 a.m.

Following Item No. 6 (DCFS Director's Report), on motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, unanimously carried, (Commissioners Franzen, McClaney, Ng, Rudnick and Williams being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Olivas was not present during the vote taken on this item.

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of September 10, 2012. (12-4345)

This item was tabled and taken out of order to allow a quorum of the Commission to be established. A quorum was established at 10:20 a.m.

Following Item No. 6 (DCFS Director's Report), on motion of Vice Chair Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW, unanimously carried, (Commissioners Franzen, McClaney, Ng, Rudnick and Williams being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Olivas was not present during the vote taken on this item.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORT

4. Chair's report for October 1, 2012 by Geneva Berger, Chair. (12-4346)

Chair Berger reported the following:

- **On September 11, 2012 during Family Reunification Week, Vice Chair Kleinberg and Commissioner Sorkin accepted a scroll on behalf of the Commission from the Board of Supervisors recognition of the Commission's work. Chair Berger thanked Director Browning, DCFS for nominating the Commission for this award.**
- **DCFS Strategic Plan was released; hard copies were distributed to the Commission.**
- **The next Commission meeting on October 15, 2012 will be the Commission's Annual Retreat. Commissioners were reminded to inform staff if they are attending the retreat.**
- **DCFS will be presented with four Productivity and Quality Awards. The winning projects and managers are:**
 - **Coordinated Services Action Team – Lisa Sorensen**
 - **The Contractor Alert Reporting Database – Diana Flaggs**
 - **E-mHub System Connecting DHS Medical Hubs and DCFS – Donna Fernandez**
 - **Incarcerated Parents Project – Art Lieras**

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)
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III. PRESENTATION

5. Presentation on Pregnant and Parenting Teens:

- Jacquelyn McCroskey DSW, USC John Milner Professor of Child Welfare
- Barbara Facher, M.S.W., The Alliance for Children's Rights
- Leslie Starr Heimov, Executive Director, Children's Law Center of California
- Mara Ziegler, LCSW, Senior Social Worker, Children's Rights Project, Public Counsel
- Nina Powell McCall, M.S.W., Children's Services Administrator, Family & Community Partnership Section, DCFS
- Donna Fernandez, LCSW, Program Manager, Child Welfare Health Services, DCFS
- Francesca LeRue, Acting Division Chief, Risk Management Division, DCFS
- Brandon Nichols, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS (12-4358)

A handout titled, "Addressing the Needs of Pregnant and Parenting Teen DCFS Policies, FYIs and Related Materials," was distributed at the start of the meeting.

Ms. Facher provided a brief introduction of the presentation and stated the following:

- **The DCFS Pregnant and Parenting Teen Workgroup was formed in 2003. The Workgroup is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Public Counsel, The Children's Law Center, and The Alliance for Children's Rights. Some of the Workgroup's activities include the creation of an advocacy for legislation to ensure that the comprehensive needs of pregnant and parenting teens are addressed. One of the objectives of the Workgroup is eliminating the intergenerational cycle of pregnant and parenting teens in the child welfare system by addressing the situation, wrapping services around these teens, ensuring the teens have a viable future, prior to the situation becoming a crisis.**

Ms. Fernandez distributed a handout and reported the following:

- **The Workgroup's accomplishments are categorized in the following key areas of legislation, programs and policy.**

Legislation

Efforts were made to create an advocate for services to strengthen the delivery of services to meet needs of pregnant and parenting teens. Leadership in these efforts was provided by The Children's Law Center (CLC), The Alliance for Children's Rights, and Public Counsel with DCFS involvement. The most significant piece of legislation that has passed is Senate Bill 500 which implemented specialized training and financial incentives for providers of Whole Family Foster Homes (WFFH).

Programs

Pregnant and Parenting Teen (PPT) Conferences based on the Family Group Decision Making Model were established with the participation of a resource specialist. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the use of the Nurse Family Partnership Program is in the final stages of implementation. The MOU will allow more DCFS pregnant youth to be referred to this evidence-based home visitation program and will also assist in the tracking of pregnant teens. "Baby City" events have been implemented to provide education and services directly to pregnant and parenting teens. The "Baby City Initiative" was mainly done through the leadership of members of the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) taskforce. There are current efforts to identify funding for these events to continue.

In an effort to improve child sexuality and reproductive education, a Childhood Adolescent Sexual Development Workgroup was established to review the previous curriculum used in training social workers and caregivers and to make recommendations for further implementation of training. CLC has been successful in receiving various grants to strengthen the reproductive health information and education accessible to youth. Recently, CLC has successfully collaborated with the Juvenile Dependency Court on a grant that includes DCFS as a partner.

Policy

The Workgroup had a major role in developing the "Youth Development Reproductive Health Procedural Guide for Social Workers" to help youth

with reproductive health and family planning. A PPT website is being established as a mechanism to increase visibility and utilization of policy related material and to promote a comprehensive approach to servicing pregnant and parenting teens.

- An ad hoc report generated in April 2012 indicated that there are approximately 270 parenting teens in the child welfare system. This number includes minor parents with nondependent children and those whose children have an open case. Currently, there are 260 female and 10 male teen parents and 303 children of teen parents in the child welfare system; 110 teen parents have open cases on their children.

Ms. Powell McCall reported the following:

- The Family Group Decision Making Model is used in the PPT Conferences to engage teens who are referred by their case workers when they are pregnant or are a parenting teen. This is a voluntary meeting that is facilitated and coordinated by a DCFS Social Worker who brings together a group of individuals that the pregnant teen has identified as an important figure in their life. This opportunity empowers the teen to create a plan. The coordination of these meetings is a key component to of the PPT meetings. Education is a significant factor addressed during these meetings. Approximately half of the teens participating in these conferences are on target to graduate at the time the meetings are coordinated. As of week ending September 28, 2012, there have been 65 PPT Conferences. The data indicates that SPA 6 and the Belvedere office have the highest number of pregnant and parenting teens. Outreach has been made to DCFS regional offices providing information on the value of the PPT Conferences. Resource specialists are one of the key stakeholders in these conferences.

Ms. Facher reported the following:

- Currently there are four resource specialists from The Alliance for Children's Rights and Public Counsel. The role of the resource specialist is to provide knowledge of resources available not only through DCFS but, Community Based Organizations as well and to help wrap services around teens. The resource specialist provides follow up to ensure teens are connected with the services. A goal underway is to recruit additional resource specialists to keep up with the demand of the conferences.

Ms. Ziegler reported the following:

- **Education is a key component of the plan created in the PPT Conferences. School enrollment is challenging due to difficulty finding an appropriate school that will provide the necessary support specific to pregnant or parenting teens and refusal of the school's administration to enroll them in their school. Many school administrators are not aware that it is illegal to refuse enrollment of a student. Credit recovery is a major challenge too. Many of these teens are behind in their credits and have experienced multiple changes in schools attended which make credit recovery very difficult and discouraging to the teens. The recent Assembly Bill 167 exempts students in foster care that have transferred in the 11th or 12th grade from school district graduation requirements that exceed State graduation requirements with certain conditions. The biggest challenge for parenting teens to continue their education is child care. The following is needed in the education area:**
 - **Education Advocates – persons that will assist the teen parents in overcoming the obstacles in the education system.**
 - **Child care advocacy for teen parents in the child welfare system.**
 - **Funding for resource specialists.**

Ms. Fernandez reported the following on WFFH's:

- **WFFH placement keeps teenage mothers in foster care united with their babies by providing placement in a foster home setting where teen parents are able to develop the skills necessary to provide a safe, stable, and permanent home for their children. This type of placement can be a licensed foster home, foster family agency certified home, approved relative caregiver, or non-relative guardianship home. Group homes are not eligible for this type of placement. In order for a teen to qualify to be in WFFH placement, the caregiver must complete 16 hours of certification and four hours annually for recertification. Certification can be obtained through local community colleges. There has been a struggle to get a viable pool of WFFH providers. There have been several efforts to recruit providers. Currently, there are approximately 17 viable WFFH providers, some of which are pending the certification.**

Ms. Starr Heimov reported the following:

- **Shared Responsibility Plan (SRP) is a piece of the WFFH legislation. WFFHs were created to respond to a pattern of teens and babies being placed in a home that was meant only for a teen and the situation often resulting with the teen and baby being separated. The SRP outlines the expectations and guidelines for the teen parent and caregiver relevant to the baby. An additional \$200 monthly is provided upon completion of the plan. This is only available when the teen's baby is not detained in the system. SRPs intend to incentivize working with the teen and baby as a family unit.**
- **In terms of pregnancy prevention, a reproductive health curriculum was created through a partnership with Children's Hospital Los Angeles approximately 8 years ago. The curriculum ranged from infancy to 18 years of age with age specific topics including gender identification. There was limited rollout with the initiative and it was shelved at some point. During that time, there were initial concerns on the County's role in providing reproductive health information. Since then, there is now a consensus that the County does have a role in providing information on reproductive health. DCFS policies on reproductive health services have changed dramatically in the past ten years. The reproductive health curriculum has been restored and is being reviewed for implementation Countywide.**
- **On the juvenile court side, through CLC grants and a grant in conjunction with the Superior Courts; all of the juvenile judges, CLC attorneys and some County Counsel have undergone training administered by CLC and the Department of Public Health on talking to youth about reproductive health and intimacy decision making. Reproductive health material is available in the courtrooms. Additional training was provided to adolescent shelter care staff, and there is a display of reproductive health material at the shelters located in Lancaster and Monterey Park. Additionally, CLC is providing a 6 to 10 hour reproductive health curriculum available to Group Homes.**
- **The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy survey found that teens prefer to get information on reproductive health from a trusted adult. Research has also shown that the two types of prevention efforts that work involve programs that are whole life programs and education on long lasting contraceptives.**

- **DCFS Pregnant and Parent Teen Coordinators are needed to help coordinate prevention and support services efforts.**

The following are responses to questions posed by the Commission:

- **On the Probation side, there has been interest in having juvenile delinquency court judges participate in the reproductive health training.**
- **There have been some efforts in providing information to the probation camps.**
- **The data in the handout distributed is preliminary and there will be further analysis.**
- **Immigration status is addressed during the PPT Conference and information on relevant services available is provided. The experience has been that it is more likely that the father of the baby has an immigrant status.**
- **One of the goals of the PPT Conferences is to connect the teen to services in their community so, that the support extends beyond the child welfare system. In addition, equipping the teen with a communication network is essential.**
- **Under the Parents in Partnership program there has been some work with the Fatherhood initiative.**
- **67% of fathers of babies born to teens are adults. It is often seen that the younger the teen, the older the adult. In this type of situation, we work with the situation differently. In most cases the father does not participate in the PPT Conferences.**

Ms. McCroskey reported the following:

- **First 5 LA's has set aside approximately \$5 million for its County initiative to create a data network for kids utilizing existing and multiple data sources to provide guidance on policy questions. There is opportunity to integrate services for pregnant and parenting teens.**
- **The Hilton Foundation has offered some support to expand work being done at the State level which will provide a more realistic picture of the population of pregnant and parenting teens.**

Emily Putnam-Hornstein, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Southern California reported the following:

- **Some of the work being done at the State level includes linking up the child welfare data on pregnant and parenting teens with other sources of data. The Hilton Foundation is assisting in evaluating data on approximately 5 million children born in California over the last ten years and cross referencing with data in the child welfare system. The research will focus on the Los Angeles area and will also provide instances of maltreatment and allow tracking of the first five years of the child's life. The findings will help to better target the high risk population and tailor prevention programs to this population. Additionally the analysis will show how pregnant and parenting teens in the child welfare system measure in comparison to other pregnant young women giving birth in the community.**
- **The estimated rate of female foster youth currently parenting as of October 2011 versus the general population birth data in Los Angeles County for 2010 shows a significantly higher rate. Additionally, the projected data when incorporating the results of Assembly Bill 12 anticipates this population will continue to grow. This type of data will help to focus resources to support this growing population. The complete report will be ready in June of 2013.**

Mr. Nichols distributed a handout on child fatalities associated with minor parents and reported the following:

- **The data in the report is drawn from a number of County agencies. Due to the low number of child fatalities with minor parents it is difficult to capture any systemic trends. Cases are evaluated on an individual basis in order to identify commonality amongst the cases to make a recommendation.**
- **There is approximately one fatality per year of a child whose parent is in foster care at the time of death.**

Ms. LeRue reported the following:

- **The data provided on deceased children of foster youth and cause of death spans from 2008 through 2012 and does not indicate whether the deceased infant or child was a foster child. A total of five child fatalities occurred during this time frame.**

- The data relating to teen births and deaths of children with teen parents in 2011 was captured based on child fatalities and consists of information obtained from the Department of Health Services. This data was cross referenced with information in the CWS/CMS system. In 2011, the collected data indicated that 22 children were born to teen parents; 7 child fatalities occurred. In 2012, there were 30 children born to teen parents and 3 child fatalities occurred.
- In 2011, there 74 referrals on teen parents that alleged abuse and neglect and in 2012 there were 30 referrals.
- In 2011, there were 55 cases with an open referral or case 10 months prior to the child's death. In 2012, 22 cases had an open referral or case 10 months prior to the child's death.
- An individual case review and analysis is conducted to determine if there were any case practice issues or policy violations. A report is being developed to inform Social Workers and Managers of any trends in child fatalities; however the trend is difficult to capture due to the low numbers of child deaths with teen parents.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)
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IV. DCFS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

6. DCFS Director's Report by Philip Browning, Director, DCFS for October 1, 2012. (12-4347)

Director Browning reported the following:

- 50 new staff will be starting their assignments this week, primarily in the locations in the areas that have been difficult to staff.
- The Strategic Plan was just released to staff members. Mid to senior level staff has been asked to volunteer as project managers for the initiatives. Line staff and Social Workers have also been asked to volunteer for workgroups.

- **A Core Practice Model is being developed that will be a comprehensive model. Meetings have taken place to discuss programs with funding sources and practices with specific criteria and policy requirements.**
- **An Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) memo was sent to the Board of Supervisors at the end of September 2012 with updates on ERCP processes. Options for a location when children come into care are being explored and there continues to be a challenge to place young children.**
- **Plans are underway to change the way Court sanctions are monitored.**
- **The first of a series of foster parent meetings was held the last week of September 2012. A number of action items resulted from the meeting.**
- **The Board of Supervisors was briefed on the reorganization of DCFS; there will be preliminary discussion with staff.**

Commissioner Curry informed Director Browning that the Department of Mental Health (DMH) will be preparing a three-year MHSA Plan . She requested Director Browning to advise the Commission of the top ten DCFS priorities in terms of the funding priorities in order to have consistency between the Commission's and DCFS objectives.

Vice Chair Kleinberg added that she would like the same information relevant to the Education Coordinating Council.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

- 7. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (12-4348)**

There were none.

Announcements

8. Announcements for the meeting of October 1, 2012. (12-4350)

Vice Chair Friedman announced that Commissioner Patricia Curry was nominated by Janis Spire, President and CEO of The Alliance for Children's Rights as one of the "Top 50 Influential Women in Los Angeles", published annually in Los Angeles Magazine.

Public Comment

9. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (12-4349)

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

Adjournment

10. Adjournment of the meeting of October 1, 2012. (12-4352)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.